Snow and ice expected this weekend

11 January 2013 - We have had a very mild start to 2013 but Met Office forecasters are predicting that it will turn much colder over the next few days.

There is a lot of uncertainty about how long the cold weather will stay with us and exactly which areas of the UK will see snow. One of the reasons for this is that an area of high pressure develops over Scandinavia, allowing cold air from the Baltic and western Russia to move towards the UK. At the same time milder air and Atlantic weather systems are trying to push in from the west, leaving the UK as the battle ground where they meet.

On Saturday, daytime temperatures are likely to be in single figures with overnight lows falling below freezing, giving widespread frost and icy stretches, particularly across southern and eastern Britain. An area of low pressure is expected to push some rain towards the west of the UK and as it hits the cold air it could fall as snow. This may give a slight covering across parts of central and southern England.

Sunday looks drier and brighter but still very cold, although rain, sleet and snow is expected to spread across Scotland and Northern Ireland during the day. The east of the country, meanwhile, is likely to see wintry showers drift in on easterly winds and it is here that snow is most likely.

Weather warnings for ice and snow have been issued for many parts of the UK over the weekend and people should be aware that there could be some disruption to travel.

Andy Page, Met Office Chief Forecaster, said: "All parts of the UK will see cold weather setting in over the weekend. We can expect sleet and snow showers to affect eastern areas at times, but with a battle developing between the cold air in the east and mild air pushing in from the west, no one should be surprised to see sleet or snow over the weekend and early next week.

Throughout the winter, the Met Office works with the Department of Health and NHS to help keep people well at times of severe weather. Our specially produced health forecasts, such as Healthy Outlook for COPD patients, give professionals and patients the opportunity to take action to help keep them well during cold weather. You can find out more information on our Cold Weather and Health, and Get ready for winter web pages.

Cold weather is forecast to remain through much of next week with any further snow most likely across eastern parts of the UK and, as ever, the latest forecasts and warnings can be found on the Met Office website, on our mobile apps , and through TV and radio broadcasts on the BBC and ITV.

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